CLAIMS

1. In a system having an electronic programming guide (EPG) for organizing programming information, the EPG supporting a displayable user interface (UI) which presents the organized programming information, a method for operating the EPG comprising the following steps:

placing, within the EPG, a hyperlink to a target resource; and

displaying the hyperlink in the EPG UI to enable a viewer to activate the target resource directly from the EPG by activating the hyperlink.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of placing the hyperlink in a program tile of the EPG UI, the program tile containing the program descriptor.

3. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of placing the hyperlink in a channel tile of the EPG UI, the channel tile containing a channel descriptor.

4. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of placing the hyperlink in a description window of the EPG UI, the description window containing description information concerning a program.

5. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of activating the target resource in response to activation of the hyperlink.

6. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of permitting a viewer to add a hyperlink to the EPG.

7. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the following steps:

associating multiple hyperlinks with corresponding information listed in the EPG; and

prioritizing the multiple hyperlinks for display according to viewer preferences.

8. A viewer computing unit programmed to perform the steps recited in claim 1.

9. In a system having an electronic programming guide (EPG) for organizing programming information, a method for operating the EPG comprising the following steps:

associating target resources with certain information listed in the EPG; and

searching the EPG to identify the information with associated target resources.

10. A method as recited in claim 9 further comprising the following steps:

correlating target specifications with corresponding information in the EPG, the target specifications identifying the target resources; and

searching the EPG to identify the information with correlated target specifications.

11. A method as recited in claim 9 further comprising the following steps:

correlating Internet universal resource locators (URLs) with corresponding information in the EPG, the URLs identifying the target resources; and

searching the EPG to identify the information with correlated URLs.

12. A computer programmed to perform the steps recited in claim 9.

13. A computer readable storage medium which directs a computer to perform the steps recited in claim 9.

14. In a system having an electronic programming guide (EPG) for organizing programming information, the EPG supporting a displayable user interface (UI) which presents the organized programming information, a method for operating the EPG comprising the following steps:

displaying the EPG UI on a visual display unit, the EPG UI having labels representing programs and channels;

dragging a particular label from its location within the EPG UI and dropping the particular label at another location on the visual display unit; and

associating an instruction with the particular label that will execute in response to activation of the particular label.

15. A method as recited in claim 14 further comprising the step of tuning the visual display unit to the program or channel in response to activation of the particular label.

16. A computer programmed to perform the steps recited in claim 14.

17. A computer readable storage medium which directs a computer to perform the steps recited in claim 14.

18. In a system having an electronic programming guide (EPG) for organizing programming information, the EPG supporting a displayable user interface (UI) which presents the organized programming information, a method for operating the EPG comprising the following steps:

associating target resources with certain information listed in the EPG; and

displaying the EPG UI on a visual display unit, the EPG UI having labels representing programs and channels;

dragging a particular program label from its location within the EPG UI and dropping the program label at another location on the visual display unit; and

associating an instruction with the program label that will execute in response to activation of the program label to perform at least one of the following tasks: (1) tune the visual display unit to an accompanying channel carrying the program represented by the program label, and (2) launch code to activate a target resource associated with the program or the accompanying channel.

19. A method as recited in claim 18, further comprising the step of executing the instruction in response to activation of the program label to tune the visual display unit to the accompanying channel carrying the program represented by the program label in an event that the program is currently playing.

20. A method as recited in claim 18, further comprising the step of executing the instruction in response to activation of the program label to launch code to activate the target resource in an event that the program represented by the program label is not currently playing.

21. A method as recited in claim 18, further comprising the step of executing the instruction in response to activation of the program label to record the program represented by the program label when the program begins playing on the accompanying channel.

22. A computer programmed to perform the steps recited in claim 18.

23. A computer readable storage medium which directs a computer to perform the steps recited in claim 18.

24. In a system having an electronic programming guide (EPG) for organizing programming information, the EPG supporting a displayable user interface (UI) which presents the organized programming information, a method for operating the EPG comprising the following steps:

displaying the EPG UI on a visual display unit, the EPG UI having labels representing programs and channels;

dragging a particular label from its location within the EPG UI and dropping the particular label at another location on the visual display unit; and

associating an instruction with the particular label that will automatically tune the visual display unit to a program or channel at a particular start time for display or recording.

25. In an interactive entertainment device capable of receiving and displaying television signals, the interactive entertainment device supporting a displayable user interface (UI), a method for operating the interactive entertainment device comprising the following steps:

placing, within the UI, a hyperlink to a target resource; and

displaying the hyperlink in the UI to enable a viewer to activate the target resource directly from the UI by activating the hyperlink.

26. A user interface unit for use in an interactive entertainment system, comprising:

a processor;

an electronic programming guide (EPG) executing on the processor to organize programming information that is descriptive of programs supplied over

the interactive entertainment system, the EPG supporting a displayable user interface (UI) which presents the organized programming information; and

one or more hyperlinks provided in the EPG UI to enable a viewer to activate target resources specified by the hyperlinks.

27. A user interface unit as recited in claim 26 further comprising a hyperlink browser executing on the processor to activate target resources specified by the hyperlinks.

28. A user interface unit, comprising:

a display;

a processor;

an operating system executing on the processor, the operating system supporting drop-and-drag functions;

an electronic programming guide (EPG) executable on the processor to organize programming information, the EPG supporting a user interface (UI) which presents the organized programming information on the display, the EPG UI having labels corresponding to the programming information; and

a manipulation device operable in conjunction with the operating system to enable a viewer to drag a particular label from its location within the EPG UI and drop the particular label at another location on the display.

29. A user interface unit as recited in claim 28, wherein the particular label corresponds to a program or channel, and the operating system associates an instruction with the particular label that will automatically tune the display to the program or channel in response to activation of the label.

30. A user interface unit as recited in claim 28, further comprising one or more hyperlinks provided in the EPG UI, the hyperlinks specifying target resources.

31. A user interface unit comprising:

a processor;

an electronic programming guide (EPG) executing on the processor to organize programming information, the EPG associating target resources with certain information listed in the EPG; and

the processor being programmed to search the EPG to identify the information with associated target resources.